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In preparing for my recent interview with Kevin Barrett on June 6, since I knew he wanted to talk about Noam Chomsky, I had the dubious pleasure of reviewing my own correspondence (1989-1995) with the man who seems to have become, in addition to the world's most famous linguist and leftist dissident, the most famous "left gatekeeper." I may have had more than a little to do with that, since I published three articles based on our correspondence (and his book *Rethinking Camelot* (1993).² and eventually the correspondence itself (my letters and summaries of his replies) on the internet, later included in my book *Looking for the Enemy* (2007).

I did not have to look very hard to discover that not much has changed since we ended our correspondence on not-so-friendly terms 13 years ago, except that now, given Chomsky's ostrich-like position concerning 9/11, many more people who have been Chomsky admirers in the past are more than befuddled by his behavior. For me this is déjà vu. But what Chomsky and I argued about, at considerable length, was much more specific – the question about JFK's Vietnam withdrawal plan. Chomsky has not budged an inch, as of 2003 at least, from the position he took with me.³ In fact, much of what he wrote to me appeared as an article in *Z* magazine ("Vain Hopes, False Dreams") in Sept. 1992⁴ and later in *Rethinking Camelot* (1993). On July 1, 1992, he wrote that he had finished "about 100 pages in draft" of what obviously became the book, and added: "Your letters, incidentally, have helped me clarify the issues to myself, as I hope will show up in what I'm writing about this."

Thus although I can claim some credit as an unacknowledged gadfly (not even a footnote!) who helped the great man clarify his thoughts, I would have been happier if the arguments that I put to him had reached a somewhat wider readership than they did. I did send "Chomsky on JFK and Vietnam" to *Z* as a letter to the editor, and a copy to Chomsky himself, but they didn't publish it. It did see the light of day in a small "assassination research" journal called *The Third Decade* (later *The Fourth Decade*, now both defunct), but to this day I feel that the debate I had privately with Chomsky was the real debate, and the debate that ensued between John Newman (*JFK and Vietnam*, 1992) and those who support Chomsky's view is a false debate – a red herring designed to distract us from the most important issue.

The false debate is about what was going on in Kennedy's head before it exploded on that fateful day in Dallas. It is about what he might or might not have secretly intended to do in Vietnam, and what he might or might not have done if he had lived. There is no answer to these questions, and there never will be, no matter how many additional documents are declassified or memoirs are written.⁵ It will remain a contest between those who believe he wanted to withdraw and would have withdrawn regardless of the military situation (the JFK "hagiographers," in Chomsky's terms) and those like Chomsky who refuse to believe this. There seems to be plenty of "documentation" to support either belief. The result is – and it is important to note what the result is – endless debate among the "experts" and confusion and political paralysis of the public. As long as this confusion reigns, there can be no political traction for those who believe Kennedy was killed by the warmongers who feared he was going to deprive them of their lucrative adventure in Vietnam, which would be a very

¹ See <http://911blogger.com/news/2008-06-15/chomsky-and-newman-false-debate>, but the link to my old website is broken. It is included in *The Transparent Conspiracy*.

² See 1993.09, 1994.05 and 2009.09.

³ See the exchange with J.K. Galbraith in *Boston Review*, Dec. 2003/Jan. 2004 (<http://bostonreview.net/archives/BR28.6/letters.html>).

⁴ https://chomsky.info/199209__/.

⁵ Cf. J.K. Galbraith, "Exit Strategy" (<https://bostonreview.net/archives/BR28.5/galbraith.html>) and "Kennedy, Vietnam and Iraq" (https://www.salon.com/2003/11/22/vietnam_12/).

plausible hypothesis if it was clear that he had indeed decided to withdraw regardless of how the military situation developed.

This is more than important; it is crucial. If it were clear that Kennedy would not have fought the war, which leads almost ineluctably to the conclusion that this was why he was killed, there would be hell to pay. This is no doubt that that is what many people thought would be the result of Oliver Stone's Hollywood blockbuster movie *JFK*, but we saw what happened. What could have sparked a revolution died, I think mainly because John Newman's "deeply flawed account" (according to Chomsky; Newman was a consultant on the film) of the historical record was immediately attacked and effectively refuted, primarily by Chomsky, the leading US "leftist dissident." One can ask legitimately, I feel, whether this was all intentional, planned by Big Brother from the beginning, given not only the outcome but the actors. What interest, for example, would Time Warner, Big Brother's biggest mouthpiece, have had in producing a "revolutionary" film? And surely I am not the first person to have thought it just a little odd that Maj. John Newman, after 20 years in Army intelligence and having been the executive assistant to the director of the National Security Agency, should walk straight out of Ft. Meade as a fully formed "assassination researcher" – one who has never, it must be noted, suggested any *institutional* culpability on the part of the agencies whose documentary records he has so thoroughly investigated.⁶

There is another reason to see Big Brother's hand in this scenario, and that is the timing of these events. First of all, the Stone film appeared only three months after another film, a British documentary called *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*, finally appeared in the US on A&E cable after being a huge success in England and 50 other countries. I think it's a better film. It doesn't mention the war, but it presents the evidence for government complicity in the assassination in a much more effective way than *JFK* does. Why did it take three years for this film to appear in the US, only to be smothered by the appearance of a Hollywood blockbuster that presented, as it turned out, a fatally flawed thesis, at least in the eyes of many, including people like Arthur Schlesinger⁷ as well as Chomsky? When I interviewed Nigel Turner, the producer of *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*, in April 1989, he told me that he had been told that he was "shaking the leaves on the trees." Could it be that Big Brother was more worried about the Turner film, and used the Stone film to overshadow it?⁸

1991 seems to have been a pivotal year. The cornerstone of Newman's "withdrawal without victory" thesis (as Chomsky puts it) was laid by Peter Dale Scott in 1972, in an essay published in vol. 5 of the Gravel edition of the *Pentagon Papers*, which was edited by none other than Noam Chomsky. Scott's thesis was that the language of two National Security

⁶ I voiced these suspicions openly and, I feel, quite courteously in my "Open Letter" that I sent to Newman after the first COPA (Coalition on Political Assassinations) in Oct. 1994 (see 1994.10.24). He did not reply. Curiously, however, Michael Parenti replied, defending Newman against my "ad hominem" attack, even though he had not read Newman's book (*JFK and Vietnam*), which was the primary focus of my letter. See also my *Correspondence with Vincent Salandria*, 2007, for Salandria's detailed analysis of Newman's second book, *Oswald and the CIA*.

⁷ Schlesinger, unlike Chomsky, agrees that JFK had decided to withdraw from Vietnam, but sees the attempt of the Stone film to connect this with the assassination as "reckless, paranoid, really despicable fantasy" ("JFK: Truth and Fiction," Wall Street Journal, Jan. 10, 1992, reprinted in *JFK: The Book of the Film*, Oliver Stone and Zachary Sklar, 1992, p. 394).

⁸ I sent my review of the film along with my first letter to Chomsky that same month, and I also sent it to Oliver Stone, who replied on July 14, 1989:

Thank you for your letter. I will look for the film you mention, but I am fully occupied now with three films and cannot pursue at this point.

By September Stone had contacted Fletcher Prouty, who features prominently in the film and in my review, and with whom I had also begun corresponding, and two years later the film appeared featuring Donald Sutherland as "Mr. X," who was of course the fictional counterpart of Fletcher Prouty. I have often wondered if I was instrumental in getting Stone and Prouty together.

Action Memoranda (NSAMs), one signed by Kennedy (263, on Oct. 11, 1963) and one signed by Johnson (273, on Nov. 26, 1963), revealed that Johnson had in fact abandoned JFK's withdrawal plan and adopted a strategy of escalation. These NSAMs were not declassified until the late 1970s, but Scott was able to cleverly reconstruct them – accurately, as it turned out – on the basis of other documents. Chomsky says he was never convinced by Scott's thesis, but published the article anyway.

Hardly a word was spoken or written about Scott's thesis, even after the documents were declassified, for the next twenty years. Then, in Jan. 1991, a third document appeared, right out of the blue, apparently. This was McGeorge Bundy's draft of NSAM 273, dated Nov. 21, 1963, the day before Kennedy was killed and therefore, one can assume, meant for him to sign, although he never read or signed it. I would like to know why that draft appeared when it did, and on whose initiative. In any case, before the year was out, Oliver Stone's *JFK* was released (in Dec. 1991), and Newman's book appeared shortly thereafter. Newman sees significant differences between the draft, meant for JFK, and the final version, meant for LBJ. Chomsky sees no significant differences in any of the documents, but adds that even if there were differences it would only show that JFK reversed his own (withdrawal) policy in the same way that LBJ supposedly reversed it in the final version of 273. There is of course still another interpretation, which is that Bundy might actually have written the draft 273 for Johnson, not Kennedy, if he was in on the assassination plot. This is hardly inconceivable, since Bundy as National Security Adviser was the highest common denominator in the intelligence loop during the presidential transition – higher than the vice-president.

If this is confusing, it's no wonder. There is plenty to argue and speculate about. Through all of it, however, there is one fact that leaps to the attention of the unencumbered observer, particularly if he has managed to avoid the morass of debate over the hidden meanings supposedly buried in the bureaucratic language of thousands of pages of government documents, and in particular of the three NSAMs in question: the only statement that refers specifically to withdrawal is *exactly the same in all three documents*:

The objectives of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remain as stated in the White House statement of October 2, 1963.

What, then, the naïve observer will rightly ask, is all the fuss about? What difference does it make if the change was made in NSAM 273, in the draft, or in a later document? We know that the change was made, and we know that it was made within days of the assassination. No one questions this, not even Chomsky, if we put it in the right language. But this is the problem. Chomsky will not allow us to put it in any language but his own. I tried, literally for years, to get him to agree on a formulation of the facts that we could both live with, but I failed.

Chomsky does not deny that there were "radically changed assessments of the military/political situation immediately after his [JFK's] assassination."⁹ On p. 91 of *Rethinking Camelot* he writes:

The first report prepared for LBJ (November 23) opened with this "Summary Assessment": "The outlook is hopeful. There is better assurance than under Diem that the war can be won. We are pulling out 1,000 American troops by the end of 1963." ... The next day, however, CIA Director John McCone informed the President that the CIA now regarded the situation as "somewhat more serious" than had been thought, with "a continuing increase in Viet Cong activity since the first of November" (the coup). Subsequent reports only deepened the gloom.

⁹ As he writes in his letter to *Boston Review* (<http://bostonreview.net/archives/BR28.6/letters.html>).

What, then, is the problem? What is the difference between saying the *policy* changed radically immediately after the assassination, or *tactics* changed radically, or the *military/political assessment* changed radically? The problem, as I wrote 15 years ago, is that

Once you admit that there was a radical policy change in the months following the assassination, whether that change was a reaction to a (presumed) change in conditions or not, you must ask if the change was related to the assassination, unless you are a fool. Then, like it or not, you are into conspiracy theory" ["Chomsky on JFK and Vietnam"].

This is the real debate, the one I was trying in vain to engage Chomsky in. Forget *policy*. There was a change. A radical change. A *reversal of something*, whether you want to call it *policy*, *tactics*, or *assessment*. What was the connection, if any, between that change, that *immediate and radical change*, and the assassination?

This is the question which, I submit, Chomsky and everyone else have been avoiding for the past 15 years.

But it's obvious, you say. Of course something changed. We ended up fighting, not withdrawing. Oh yeah? I am a linguist and a language teacher. I pay attention to words. I am not oblivious to distinctions that can be made with words. But Noam Chomsky is the greatest linguist in the world. He is not easy to argue with, especially when it comes to language. For example, he wrote to me on Jan. 7, 1993:

Let's distinguish two different theses: (1) the M-thesis (yours), and (2) the C-thesis (mine). The M-thesis holds that there were plans to withdraw from Vietnam, "predicated on the assumption of military success" (your words). The C-thesis holds that JFK planned to withdraw without victory, that is, whether the assumption of military success were to hold or not.

The M-thesis is uncontroversially true, and completely – totally – without interest. Furthermore, it has been known to be true, and uninteresting, for almost 30 years. The basic content of the withdrawal plans was made public at once, in October 1963. Since the release of the *Pentagon Papers*, it has been known that from mid-1962, JFK's war manager Robert McNamara and the US command in Vietnam laid plans to withdraw.

Accordingly, we know that the M-thesis is true, uncontroversially and uninterestingly. As to the C-thesis, the evidence refutes it across the board and without exception, from whatever angle we approach it. The evidence reveals that JFK was strongly committed to victory, and was willing (reluctantly) to go along with the withdrawal plans drawn up by the top military command and advocated by McNamara-Taylor on the explicit presumption of victory.

But I had already written to him six months earlier (June 18, 1992):

The standard accounts do not say what PP Gravel says quite clearly. They say the opposite. They say (like Cockburn) there was *no change of policy*, meaning the policy of *escalation*. What should be "obvious," however, and what the PP say, is that there was no change in the policy of *withdrawal* until after Kennedy's death. There's a big difference. Almost no one says that Johnson continued Kennedy's withdrawal policy, and then reversed it. They say Johnson continued Kennedy's policy of escalation.

Here are a few examples I've collected, quite at random (emphasis added):

...President Kennedy...began the process of backing up American military aid with "advisers." At the time of his murder there were 23,000 [sic] of them in South Vietnam. *President Johnson took the same view* of the importance of Vietnam...(J.M. Roberts, *The Pelican History of the World*, 1980, p. 988-989).

Although *Johnson followed Kennedy's lead* in sending more and more troops to Vietnam (it peaked at 542,000, in 1969), it was never enough to meet General Westmoreland's demands... (Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 1987, p. 405).

By October 1963, some 16,000 American troops were in Vietnam... Under President Johnson, the "advisors" *kept increasing*...

Lyndon Johnson, who had campaigned in 1964 as a "peace candidate," *inherited and expanded the Vietnam policy of his predecessor* (Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *A Pocket History of the United States*, 1981, p. 565-566)."

Thanks to accounts like those of Schlesinger and Karnow, the general public has not even been aware that there was a withdrawal policy, much less that Johnson reversed it – despite the clear account in PP Gravel. If the Stone film has informed people of this much, it has performed a public service.

This is crucial. It is not a matter of the "M-thesis" being true or false. It is true, as Chomsky says, and therefore not a "thesis" but a fact. The important question is how well known the fact is. A fact that is little known, however "uncontroversially true," has no political consequences. The "M-thesis" was not well known before 1992, and still today the general public is not aware of it. This makes it not only "interesting," but crucially important.

Now, how is it possible for what I was saying to Chomsky, and am still saying to anyone who will listen, to be "uncontroversially true" but little known, and therefore crucially important?

It is possible because of the false debate that Newman and Chomsky, almost as if they were a tandem circus act, started in the wake of the Stone film, and which endures to this day. The "M-thesis" was immediately transformed into the "C-thesis," which is not a misnomer because it really is Chomsky's thesis just as much as it is Newman's, because it is what Chomsky needs to make his argument. It is the straw man he needs to pummel.

Let me offer another example of what it is like for one of the least famous linguists in the world (me) to argue about language with the most famous linguist in the world. Chomsky and I could not agree on the difference between an *assumption* and a *condition*. NSAMs 263 and 273 (including the draft) refer to the White House statement of Oct. 2, 1963.¹⁰ This statement says, in paragraph 3:

Secretary McNamara and General Taylor reported their judgment that the major part of the U.S. military task can be completed by the end of 1965, although there may be a continuing requirement for a limited number of U.S. training personnel. They reported that by the end of this year, the U.S. program for training Vietnamese should have progressed to the point where 1,000 U.S. military personnel assigned to South Viet-Nam can be withdrawn..

The reference here, in turn, is to the report of the same date that gives six conclusions and six recommendations.¹¹ The first conclusion is:

¹⁰ See <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/state63.htm>.

¹¹ See <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pentagon2/doc142.htm>.

1. The military campaign has made great progress and continues to progress.

The second and third recommendations are that:

2. A program be established to train Vietnamese so that essential functions now performed by U.S. military personnel can be carried out by Vietnamese by the end of 1965. It should be possible to withdraw the bulk of U.S. personnel by that time.

3. In accordance with the program to train progressively Vietnamese to take over military functions, the Defense Department should announce in the very near future presently prepared plans to withdraw 1000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963. This action should be explained in low key as an initial step in a long-term program to replace U.S. personnel with trained Vietnamese without impairment of the war effort.

Anyone who has read anything that Chomsky has written on the subject knows that he interprets the phrase *without impairment of the war effort* as an *explicit condition*. He repeats this over and over again, as he did in his letters to me. We went round and round on it. For example, I wrote on Aug. 3, 1992:

The PP also support your point that the withdrawal plan was conditional on military success, but I think it is more accurate to say that it was based on the *assumption* of success. I don't read the condition in the McNamara-Taylor recommendations as explicitly as you do.

There is a difference between saying "If we continue to win the war, we'll leave by 1966" vs. "The military campaign continues to make great progress. We should be able to leave by 1966." The latter is only implicitly conditional. I assume you take "without impairment of the war effort" in the third recommendation as the explicit condition, but I also see a difference between "We should be able to withdraw without impairment of the war effort" vs. "If it does not impair the war effort, we will withdraw." Under the latter formulation, the withdrawal decision has not been made, and there is no indication of what the decision will be. Under the former, which is what McNamara-Taylor say, the decision has been made, and the prediction is that the withdrawal will probably not impair the war effort.

That would be the only point I would insist on. One could argue further, though, if one wanted to stretch it, that the phrase "without impairment of the war effort" refers more to how the action "should be explained" to the public (i.e. "in low-key") than to a real condition: the public should get the impression that the war effort will not be impaired. This interpretation is not illogical, because propaganda purposes aside, how could the military (or Kennedy) really have thought that withdrawal would not impair the war effort? It would have to.

What is the problem with saying that Johnson reversed the withdrawal policy because conditions changed? Your basic argument would still apply: JFK was a superhawk and would not have withdrawn without victory, and thus would have done the same thing Johnson did. But the argument, formulated in this way, is conjecture, and of course can be countered by conjecture. So what? But to insist that there *was* no withdrawal policy, or that if there was one it never changed, and that therefore Johnson did not reverse it, seems specious to me, frankly.

Let me risk an analogy. Suppose Roosevelt had accepted his advisers' recommendation not to drop the bomb, and made this policy by issuing a NSAM to that effect. "The war is going well and I don't want to kill *that* many Japs," he supposedly thought. He is murdered. Truman immediately orders a major review of

the no-bomb policy and shortly thereafter, citing unforeseen developments in the progress of the war, drops the bomb.

Of course, the analogy is weak because we are talking about Japs as the victims instead of 58,000 of our own red-blooded, but still, would you be comfortable saying Truman's decision to drop the bomb was a matter of "tactics"? Would you say there was no policy change, that Truman did not reverse Roosevelt's decision, that Roosevelt and Truman in fact had the same policy about dropping the bomb? Would you insist on saying this, as opposed to saying "Truman reversed Roosevelt's no-bomb policy because conditions changed"?

Add to this fictive scenario that Roosevelt's murder occurred under very suspicious circumstances, much of the evidence (and lack of it) pointing to the military-industrial-intelligence establishment, who badly wanted the bomb dropped for various (the usual) reasons. Would it be unreasonable to suspect a connection between the smaller crime of the murder and the larger one of the dropping of the bomb?

On April 5, 1993, I wrote:

I cannot believe you fail to see a significant difference between

- a) Mary is doing well in school. She should graduate on schedule.
- b) If Mary continues to do well in school, she will graduate on schedule.

a) is analogous with McNamara-Taylor, containing a prediction and an assumption, or, if you like, an implicit condition. In a), graduation is assumed to be probable. In b), which contains an explicit condition, graduation is neither probable nor improbable. You refer to McNamara-Taylor as if it were analogous to b), implying that withdrawal was assumed to be neither probable nor improbable. This is simply not true, and misleading. The implication of NSAM 263 and the McNamara-Taylor recommendations was that withdrawal by the end of 1965 was probable.

The phrase "without impairment of the war effort," which you attach great significance to, means, from the point of view of the people who made the statement (McNamara, Taylor, and JFK, confirming them), "without impairment of the effort by the South Vietnamese government, with US assistance, to suppress the Viet Cong insurgency." This was the official definition of "victory."

None of my arguments or analogies had any effect whatsoever. As far as I know, I am the only person to take him up on the point, but who am I to argue with the greatest linguist in the world about the difference between an assumption and a condition, or about the meaning of a word like *policy*?

It was apparently my "Open Letter"¹² to John Newman, a copy of which I also sent to Chomsky, that made him lose all patience with me. He wrote back, on Feb. 9, 1995, including "a few excerpts from the book [*Rethinking Camelot*] that you misquote with your usual consistency, which also extends to your treatment of the historical and documentary record. I frankly see no point wasting any more time on this, and won't." I replied:

Feb. 21, 1995

Dear Noam,

¹² See 1994.10.94.

Thanks for answering. It is more than Newman himself or Peter Scott have done—and we presumably *agree* on the political significance of the JFK assassination!

I did not "misquote" you in my letter to Newman. I referred to pp. 91-93, where you state clearly that the assessments of the military situation in Vietnam were radically revised *after* JFK's murder, beginning with McCone's report to Johnson on November 24.

You now quote to me from pp. 81-83, where you say there were negative reports in early November. I don't think anyone denies this. The question is when the *consensus* changed from optimistic to pessimistic. Your remarks on pp. 91-93 are the clearest statement I know of that the consensus changed *after* Nov. 22, and they are confirmed by Lodge's optimistic appraisal at the Honolulu conference on Nov. 20, which I quoted in the Newman letter.

Why are you hedging now? Do you want to say now that what you say on pp. 91-93 is misleading, or that only stupid readers like me would understand it the way I have? Do you want to say now that the consensus changed before Nov. 22, or that there never was a consensus either way?

The fact is that you say clearly in the book what I tried in vain to get you to say in our correspondence: that the assessment of the military situation changed radically—after Nov. 22, but only coincidentally—which caused the withdrawal policy to be reversed (or in your words, "which canceled the assumptions on which the withdrawal plans had been conditioned" [p. 91]). The facts are thus:

1. JFK was murdered (quite coincidentally, from your point of view) on Nov. 22.
2. "The first report prepared for LBJ (November 23) opened with this 'Summary Assessment': 'The outlook is hopeful. There is better assurance than under Diem that the war can be won. We are pulling out 1,000 American troops by the end of 1963'" (p. 91).
3. "The next day, however, CIA Director John McCone informed the President that the CIA *now* regarded the situation as 'somewhat more serious' than had been thought, with 'a continuing increase in Viet Cong activity since the first of November' (the coup). Subsequent reports only deepened the gloom" (p. 91, my emphasis).
4. McCone's reassessment was *retrospective*: "McCone agreed [in *December*] that 'indices on progress of the war turned unfavorable for the GVN' about July 1963, moving 'very sharply against the GVN' after the coup" (p. 92).
5. In the light of the "radically revised assessments of the military situation, which cancelled the assumptions on which the withdrawal plans had been conditioned" (p. 91) – all (coincidentally) after Nov. 22 – the US position moved, as you put it in the title of this chapter, "from terror [JFK's policy of counterinsurgency] to aggression" (LBJ's policy of direct involvement).

Note that I have avoided saying that LBJ "reversed the withdrawal policy," since you made it clear in our previous correspondence that you will not accept this formulation. For you, LBJ was if anything less hawkish than JFK, and their policy of winning the war, and withdrawing only on condition of victory, was the same. As you know, I disagree with you on this, but this does not mean we have to disagree on points 1-5 above.

Can we agree, finally, on these five points? Or do you think I have "misquoted" you again?

I cannot understand why you think our discussion is a "waste of time," particularly since in one of your previous letters you said my questions had helped you clarify your own thinking on these matters (albeit with conclusions opposite to mine). I am hoping that you will be kind enough to return the favor, at least as far as my understanding of your position is concerned. Your book, especially pp. 91-93, made it clear to me that we agree on the one crucial (to me, anyway) point that I was trying to establish during our correspondence (or 5 points, as above). Now you say that I have misunderstood and misrepresented what you say in the book. Is it too much to ask you to say, as clearly as possible, whether you agree with points 1-5 above, which are stated almost entirely in your own words?

Sincerely,
Michael

Chomsky did not reply substantively, either to this or to my letter to Newman. What he did say (March 13, 1995) was only partly comprehensible, even as sarcasm. He thanked me for the "real insight" that "the period from late October 1963 to 8 am Nov. 22, particularly the immediate post-coup period in early November, all actually *followed* the assassination." He added – sarcastically, of course – that since "Bundy, McNamara, Ball, Mansfield, the CIA, and all the rest were planning to kill JFK all along because of his secret intentions to withdraw without victory" it only makes sense to suspect that the pre-assassination period really *did* precede the assassination, but the plotters were leaking false reports of pessimistic appraisal then so as to cover their tracks from assiduous researchers seeking to bring out the real truth." He concluded:

After having read your utterly convincing theory of Newman being an agent, programmed to write a book that could easily be dismissed in standard black propaganda style so as to conceal the real truth, maybe that's true of others too. There is someone who comes to mind. How about fessing up, finally, before someone else notices it too. Or maybe that would be too dangerous: the CIA has its ways of dealing with traitors, as we know.

Maybe I'm just obtuse, but I still don't understand what made him so angry. It seemed to be more because of what I had said to Newman than what I said to him. I would like to know. It's not too late. Both Chomsky and Newman have weighed in on 9/11,¹³ and we are again deeply embroiled in a war that followed immediately upon a national catastrophe. This time there is no doubt about the causal relationship. Or is there? We are fighting in Iraq (and Afghanistan) because of 9/11. Bin Laden flew his planes into the WTC and the Pentagon, so we attacked Baghdad, right? Or how was that again? Something about WMDs. No, that's more Iran. Or was it NSAMs? If so, which one, which draft, which paragraph, which word, and how can we ever know for sure anyway? Something changed, though, didn't it? One day we had no war, and then we had a lot of war. In between there was *something*. Maybe Prof. Schlesinger was right to call it "reckless, paranoid, really despicable fantasy" to suspect a connection between the murder of a president and a war that followed. Prof. Chomsky seems to agree. What does Prof. Newman think? (He does not say in his books.) But now the situation is reversed. Now Big Brother tells us that there *is* a connection, oh yes, very definitely a connection, between the mass murders on 9/11 and the war(s) that followed. Now the only "reckless, paranoid, and really despicable fantasy" is the suggestion that the

¹³ Chomsky's views are well known. For Newman's contribution, see the 2005 "McKinney Report," i.e. "The 9/11 Commission Report: One Year Later" which has become difficult to find, but see <https://www.voltairenet.org/IMG/pdf/McKinneyReport20050722transcript.pdf>, retrieved on Nov. 29, 2020.

connection is not the one Big Brother says it is. What do Prof. Chomsky and Prof. Newman say about that? I'll be listening, but I won't be writing them any more letters.